Talmud - Mas. Berachoth 2a

C H A P T E R I

MISHNAH. FROM WHAT TIME MAY ONE RECITE THE SHEMA' IN THE EVENING? FROM THE TIME THAT THE PRIESTS ENTER [THEIR HOUSES] IN ORDER TO EAT THEIR TERUMAH[1] UNTIL THE END OF THE FIRST WATCH.[2] THESE ARE THE WORDS OF R. ELIEZER. THE SAGES SAY: UNTIL MIDNIGHT. R. GAMALIEL SAYS: UNTIL THE DAWN COMES UP.[3] ONCE IT HAPPENED THAT HIS[4] SONS CAME HOME [LATE] FROM A WEDDING FEAST AND THEY SAID TO HIM: WE HAVE NOT YET RECITED THE [EVENING] SHEMA'. HE SAID TO THEM: IF THE DAWN HAS NOT YET COME UP YOU ARE STILL BOUND TO RECITE. AND NOT IN RESPECT TO THIS ALONE DID THEY SO DECIDE, BUT WHEREVER THE SAGES SAY UNTIL MIDNIGHT', THE PRECEPT MAY BE PERFORMED UNTIL THE DAWN COMES UP. THE PRECEPT OF BURNING THE FAT AND THE [SACRIFICIAL] PIECES, TOO, MAY BE PERFORMED TILL THE DAWN COMES UP.[5] SIMILARLY, ALL [THE OFFERINGS] THAT ARE TO BE EATEN WITHIN ONE DAY MAY LAWFULLY BE CONSUMED TILL THE COMING UP OF THE DAWN. WHY THEN DID THE SAGES SAY 'UNTIL MIDNIGHT'? IN ORDER TO KEEP A MAN FAR FROM TRANSGRESSION.

GEMARA. On what does the Tanna base himself that he commences: FROM WHAT TIME?[6] Furthermore, why does he deal first with the evening [Shema']? Let him begin with the morning [Shema']! — The Tanna bases himself on the Scripture, where it is written [And thou shalt recite them] . . . when thou liest down and when thou risest up,[7] and he states [the oral law] thus: When does the time of the recital of the Shema' of lying down begin? When the priests enter to eat their terumah.[8] And if you like, I can answer: He learns [the precedence of the evening] from the account of the creation of the world, where it is written, And there was evening and there was morning, one day.[9] Why then does he teach in the sequel: THE MORNING [SHEMA'] IS PRECEDED BY TWO BENEDICTIONS AND FOLLOWED BY ONE. THE EVENING [SHEMA'] IS PRECEDED BY TWO BENEDICTIONS AND FOLLOWED BY TWO?[10] Let him there, too, mention the evening [Shema'] first? — The Tanna commences with the evening [Shema'], and proceeds then to the morning [Shema']. While dealing with the morning [Shema'], he expounds all the matters relating to it, and then he returns again to the matters relating to the evening [Shema'].

The Master said: FROM THE TIME THAT THE PRIESTS ENTER TO EAT THEIR 'TERUMAH'. When do the priests eat terumah? From the time of the appearance of the stars. Let him then say: 'From the time of the appearance of the stars'? — This very thing he wants to teach us, in passing, that the priests may eat terumah from the time of the appearance of the stars. And he also wants to teach us that the expiatory offering is not indispensable,[11] as it has been taught:[12] And when the sun sets we-taher,[13] the setting of the sun is indispensable [as a condition of his fitness] to eat terumah, but the expiatory offering is not indispensable to enable him to eat terumah. But how do you know that these words 'and the sun sets' mean the setting of the sun, and this 'we-taher' means that the day clears away?

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(1) If the priests have become ritually unclean, they are not permitted to eat terumah, to which a certain holiness attaches, till they have taken a bath and the sun has set.

(2) I.e., until either a fourth or a third of the night has passed. V. infra 3a.

(3) Maim: about one and one fifth hours before actual sunrise. V. Pes. 93b.

(4) R. Gamaliel's.

(5) This sentence is parenthetical. It is nowhere laid down that the burning of the fat etc. is permitted only till midnight. It is mentioned here in order to inform us that wherever the time fixed for the performance of a duty is the night, it expires at the rise of the dawn (Rashi).